

2010 Emerging Business of the Year



"We were referred by our lender to contact the KSBDC to see if this would be a good investment for us. We contacted them from the very beginning and they have been with us every step of the way and are still helping us after two years of being in business."

– Jena Johnson, Co-owner



Jena and Doug purchased the Breckenridge Café in 2008 and renamed it The New Breck.

Emporia State University Kansas Small Business Development Center

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The New Breck

Owner	Doug Disney and Jena Johnson
Nature of Business	Restaurant
City	Americus
County	Lyon
Phone	620-443-5612
Business Structure	LLC
Business Began	2008
Employees	17
KSBDC Consultant	Gwen Spade

What do you do when the only restaurant in your community is going to close? Just buy it! Two years ago when the Breckenridge Café in Americus, Kansas prepared to close its doors, that's exactly what Doug Disney and Jena Johnson did. The café had operated as a community-owned restaurant for 20 years and as investors aged they were ready to retire and move on. As is evident in many small rural towns, the local café is a gathering spot, information exchange, visitor's bureau, and last but not least, a place to get great local food and service with a smile.

When Doug & Jena purchased the old Breckenridge Café in 2008, they renamed it "The New Breck" and overhauled the menu. The ESU KSBDC and consultant, Gwen Spade assisted Doug & Jena with their cash flow projections, business plan, business valuation, ownership structure, QuickBooks set-up and employment related questions.

Secret to Success
"The customers are our secret to our success. They are the best advertising that we have. If you have quality and consistency in your product then your satisfied customers will do the rest."

Their greatest challenge has been reprogramming the community about what they offer and getting people accustomed to it. The community had become used to the old café and it took a concentrated effort to make people realize it was the same type of business, in the same place, with new offerings. This was accomplished by constantly interacting and communicating with people in the community and the surrounding area.

Like many small town restaurants they rely on their "regulars." Many of these "regulars" are there daily, and others, a little less often. Still, these loyal customers provide the best advertising as they tell their friends and others about the great food and environment at The New Breck.

Even prior to opening The New Breck, Doug and Jena were involved in community events including Americus Days, the Save the Americus Pool Committee and the local PTO. Since opening the business, they have continued these activities and consider it one way the business can contribute to the community. Since opening, they have been asked to do a fundraiser in which teachers and an administrator served as wait staff for an evening and a percentage of the sales were donated to the school's PTO. They regularly host community meetings for community groups and organizations. Additionally, they serve as the central portal for information on area events since they are open seven days a week.

Their advice to other potential entrepreneurs is, "Do your research before you make a decision. Contact the KSBDC and they will help you to make a very knowledgeable decision. They have the tools to help you and the cost is nothing."